25 DIE IN BATTLE S-1 10-3-68

Snipers Silenced By Mexican Army

By STRATFORD C. JONES

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican army troops silenced sniper guns early today in the bloodiest battle yet of Mexico City's student rebellion. Tanks patrolled downtown streets of the capital, due to become host Oct. 12 to the Olympic Games.

Police and hospitals reported 25 persons were killed in an hours-long exchange of fire set off by a rifle shot, presumably aimed at a soldier, at the crowded site of an anti-government rally last night.

Witnesses estimated more than 100 were wounded and a check of three of Mexico City's hospitals showed 72 injured had been treated.

FRESH SOLDIERS relieved the first units before dawn in the battle zone, in and around the Plaza of the Three Cultures, and moved from build-

Turn to Page 4, Column 5

Continued from Page 1

ing to building in the adjoining Tlatelolco apartment district to round up civilians suspected of sniping.

Bitter feeling was reflected in the reaction of a troop commander to the discovery of a number of leaflets and a paperback book on a youth who surrendered with his girl at gunpoint during the nocturnal shooting.

The officer threw them in the youth's face and exclaimed: "Communism! You read this stuff. That's why people are dying out there, because you read this stuff."

IN ALL, 40 PERSONS are listed as dead in Mexico City disorders, touched off in mid-July by a gang fight between two high schools. Two others were killed in a battle between two factions of college students July 11 at Puebla, 65 miles southeast of this city.

Of the major encounters in Mexico City, all have been in the Tlatelolco district, where Hernando Cortes crushed the last Aztec army. It is a district now marked by high-rise, low-rent apartments, some owned by the government and others by banks. Many of the 70,000 people living there are government employes and pensioners.

TLATELOLCO IS AN Aztec word meaning "Place of the Gods." It was the site of the Indians' main pyramid at the time the Spanish conquerors came.

International aspects were reflected in Rome. A group of Italian Communist deputies asked Premier Giovanni Leone to call for suspension of the Olympic Games. They said it would be impossible to hold them "in the atmosphere of terror and bloody repression by the Mexican government."

THE INTERNATIONAL Olympic Committee called a meeting today to discuss the violence and its possible effect on the 1968 summer games, scheduled to open in the Mexican capital in nine days.

The government spokesman, presidential press secretary Fernando Garza, said of the Olympics: "There is no danger. All necessary precautions have been taken."

He said the fighting began when "one group of students began firing at another." He added: "The end has come to this group of militant students. A cleaning out has been made already."

FIRING IN THE area of the Plaza of the Three Cultures near downtown continued sporadically into the early-morning hours. Soldiers said the main pockets of student resistance were two buildings in the adjoining Tlatelolco apartment district.

An editor for the newspaper El Universal said his reporters told him of soldiers finding 20 bodies in upper stories of the Social Security Hospital, where snipers had been seen firing.

Gen. Marcelino Garcia Barragan, the defense secretary, said he had orders to crush the student uprising at any cost.

One newsman said hundreds of persons were lying in the plaza after the first volley of

gunfire.

THROUGHOUT THE evening, snipers with automatic weapons fired from apartment windows and troops brought armored cars into the battle and poured machine-gun fire back into the high-rise buildings. The troops began clearing out the buildings about four hours after the battle began. Hundreds of residents already had fled.

But elsewhere, students roamed the streets with .22-caliber automatic pistols and Molotov cocktails, setting dozens of buses and cars afire.

An army official said paratroop Gen. Jose Hernandez Toledo, who led troops who occupied the University of Mexico last month, was critically wounded.

A SECRET POLICE agent said snipers were shooting at ambulance drivers and "we can't get in and pick up the dead bodies lying in the plaza."

About 6,000 striking students had gathered in the plaza for a march to the Santo Tomas Vocational School, scene of the major fighting in a battle that left 15 dead in the night of Sept. 23.

Because of troops along the route, student leaders called off the march. But then four flares fell into the plaza, scattering the crowd, and a soldier appeared around the corner of a church.

A SHOT RANG OUT, presumably from a sniper firing at the soldier, and the plaza instantly was filled with a roar of automatic weapons fire.

Associated Press newsmen in various positions, some pinned down by the heavy fire, reported seeing dead persons lying near them.

One AP newsman saw two civilians killed and 10 wounded in front of the Foreign Ministry, apparently victims of a civilian sniper in an apartment window above. All the victims had been holding their hands up while troops held them at gunpoint.